

VZCZCXRO8335  
OO RUEHDBU RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHROV RUEHSR  
DE RUEHPS #0836/01 2761655  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
O 031655Z OCT 06  
FM USOFFICE PRISTINA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6565  
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0863  
RHMFISS/CDR USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE  
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK  
RHFMISS/AFSOUTH NAPLES IT  
RHMFISS/CDR TF FALCON  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC  
RUEPGEA/CDR650THMIGP SHAPE BE  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC  
RUFOANA/USNIC PRISTINA SR

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PRISTINA 000836

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR DRL, INL, AND EUR/SCE, FOR BRAUN, USUN FOR DREW  
SCHUFLETOWSKI, USOSCE FOR STEVE STEGER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/03/2016

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [KCRM](#) [UNMIK](#) [YI](#)

SUBJECT: KOSOVO: DACI CAMP CAMPAIGNING HARD FOR LDK  
PRESIDENCY, INCLUDING THROUGH INTIMIDATION

Classified By: COM TINA KAIDANOW FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Former Kosovo Assembly Speaker Nexhat Daci is waging an aggressive early campaign to become president of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK). There are indications that Daci or his supporters may be using intimidation tactics to wrest control of the party at the grass roots level. The leadership of Kosovo's largest political party has a major role to play in ongoing final status talks and -- more importantly -- in the implementation phase of any future agreement. Daci has a track record as an autocratic and corrupt leader; he is also a populist who is rallying opposition to decentralization, particularly in Gjilane. He is stepping into a vacuum left by the continued failure of the Unity Team and the LDK leadership to explain and defend decentralization and other parts of the final status package.  
END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) The race to select a new party president for the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), the largest ethnic Albanian party and senior member of the ruling coalition, is in its early stages. The LDK presidency has decided that its convention, at which the president will be selected by 355 party representatives, must occur no later than 30 days after November 7, the date by which branch elections are scheduled to be completed.

¶3. (SBU) The LDK has 36 branches (including 12 Diaspora branches), 498 sub-branches, and from 1500-1600 smaller units called "actives." It is in these early actives -- small neighborhood meetings at which delegates to sub-branch meetings are selected -- in Ferizaj, Gjilane and Viti municipalities that Daci and his supporters have begun their play to retake the LDK from the "old guard" of President Fatmir Sejdiu, current Assembly head Kole Berisha, and Prizren mayor Eqrem Kryeziu.

¶4. (SBU) Because Sejdiu is the President of Kosovo, he is prohibited from actively campaigning. If he were to win the race for LDK president, he would have to relinquish one of the two offices. The widespread belief is that he would retain his job as Kosovo's President, and delegate his authority as head of the party to a subordinate. While

Sejdiu is a respected figure within established LDK circles, Kosovo's governing coalition, and the international community, it is not inconceivable that Daci and his supporters will be able to muster enough grass roots discontent to unseat him.

15. (C) Although Ferizaj, Gjilane and Viti municipalities are not among the first to hold elections at the branch level to elect delegates to the party convention, they are important LDK strongholds. Daci has enlisted the help of former Deputy PM Adem Salihaj from Ferizaj and Gjilane mayor Xhemajl Hyseni to try and control the selection process in those two localities. According to recent news reports, there were irregularities at elections at a sub-branch in Gjilane because Hyseni and the head of the sub-branch reportedly only invited their followers to participate. Salihaj bragged to reporters that elections in Ferizaj are proceeding well. He noted that supporters of rival Faik Grainca, the current mayor of Ferizaj (and Sejdiu supporter), have lost elections at the lower levels and predicted they would not have more than one delegate at the Ferizaj branch election. In at least two instances of which we have heard, established LDK officials -- Sejdiu advisor and former Viti mayor Samet Dalipi, and Kosovo Assembly and LDK presidency member Sanije Aliaj from Ferizaj -- reportedly failed in their initial bids to be selected as delegates at sub-branch and active level meetings controlled by Daci's supporters.

16. (C) Two recent car bombings in Gjilane targeting Kosovo government officials may be linked to LDK infighting. On the evening of September 14, an explosive device placed under the private vehicle of Minister of Internal Affairs Fatmir Rexhepi detonated and destroyed the vehicle, which was parked in front of Rexhepi's residence. Shortly before midnight on

PRISTINA 00000836 002 OF 002

September 16, a similar bomb destroyed an official vehicle from the Ministry of Local Government Administration assigned to Aferdita Sylla, an advisor to Minister Lutfi Haziri. Haziri is also the Deputy Prime Minister and a former mayor of Gjilane. A high-ranking UNMIK official told us September 18 that he believed these "seemingly LDK-related" incidents are endemic only to Gjilane, although shortly thereafter another explosion occurred at a restaurant in a village in nearby Ferizaj. Police are still investigating all three incidents.

17. (SBU) An LDK leader in Mitrovica, Ramadan Kelmendi, told the local daily Koha Ditore that since the start of the party's internal elections he has received constant anonymous telephone threats. He said that in late August he was threatened not to put up his candidacy for the LDK's leadership in Mitrovica. Kelmendi told the paper that he still receives calls in which the sound of a Kalashnikov being fired can be heard in the background. We suspect the threats against Kelmendi may be coming from Daci supporters since the LDK largely boycotted a recent rally with local students in ethnic-Albanian southern Mitrovica in which Daci participated.

18. (C) COMMENT: Daci was a polarizing figure as president of the Kosovo Assembly, someone who became an obstacle to the unity necessary to achieving a final status resolution for Kosovo. According to reports by the Auditor General, an international, Daci's tenure at the Assembly was also marked by high levels of personal corruption. Should he defeat Sejdiu, by means fair or foul, the process of negotiating and implementing a status decision would be greatly complicated. Daci is capitalizing on three things: Sejdiu himself is barred from campaigning; the old guard of the LDK appears to think that its authority over the party is unquestioned; and decentralization may be the issue that gets him traction at the grass roots level. Sejdiu's stature may in the end prevail, but we sense a certain complacency on the part of his supporters and we are urging Sejdiu to effectively counter the Daci momentum by making his own voice far more

prominent in Kosovo's political life. END COMMENT.

19. (SBU) U.S. Office Pristina clears this cable in its entirety for release to U.N. Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari.  
KAIDANOW